

## **Section IV**

### **Community Facilities**

#### ***Introduction***

The Town of Sunapee has undertaken the construction of two major community facilities in the last 10 years. A new Highway Garage was constructed north of Sunapee Village on Route 11 and a Safety Services Building was constructed at the corner of Sargent Road and Route 11. During this period the Middle/High School was enlarged and renovated.

As population grows, there is a proportional stress on a community's ability to provide adequate services to its residents. This stress, in turn, creates the need for larger and more modern facilities from where these services can be administered.

In order to properly plan for future facility needs, it is important to track population growth, facility conditions, financial trends, and community attitudes. This section reviews the status of each town facility and makes recommendations to address future needs.

#### ***Town Office***

The existing Town Office was built in 1989 and was renovated in 2007 to add additional space in the basement and improve the space on the upper level. The building has approximately 5400 square feet of space on two levels.

The Town Office houses the Selectmen's Office, Town Clerk/Tax Collector, Water and Sewer Department, Treasurer, Planning/Zoning Office, Recreation Department, Assessing, and Welfare Office on the upper level. The lower level has a conference room which seats 60-70 people, an employee kitchen, a walk-in vault for vital documents, general document storage, and the food pantry.

It is anticipated that the recent renovation will allow for all departments to continue to be housed in the building for the next 5-10 years. The town manager, however, has indicated that there is a need for increased document storage space.

#### ***Safety Services Building***

The Safety Services Building was completed in 2006. It is located at the corner of Route 11 and Sargent Road. This building houses both the Fire and Police departments. The building has conference rooms and offices on two floors along with the garage space for fire equipment storage and vehicle maintenance. Police vehicles are able to enter the building to unload suspects directly to a detention area.

### ***Highway Garage***

The new Highway Garage was constructed in October 2002 and is located on Route 11 north of Sunapee Village. The main building has a maintenance area for vehicles and office space for employees. There are also structures for the storage of winter sand and salt.

### ***Abbott Library***

The Abbott Library is located at the corner of Main Street and Route 11. The building has a main floor and basement, with a gross area of 3,180 square feet, of which 2,460 net square feet are adult and children's library areas and work space. The Library collection includes: 28,595 books, 4,351 music, video and audio book compact disks, and 4 public access internet computers. The current staffing includes 2 full-time and 4 part-time staff. In 2009, there were 25,470 adult patron visits, over 7000 visits by children, and 53,643 items circulated; an increase of 2% over 2008.

The vision for the Library's future is as a cultural and educational center for the community, a place to gather, relax and learn. However, the Library's ability to serve the community is substantially limited by the lack of space for meeting, reading and study, as well as inadequate on-site parking. Off-site locations for meetings and book storage are an inconvenient reality. The Library is half the size it should be to meet national library standards.

In May 2007, a Building Committee was established by the Library Trustees to explore possible sites for a new larger library in the Village District, to make a site recommendation to the Trustees and to prepare a preliminary design and budget for the proposed building. More than 14 sites were considered. In October 2007, the site determined to be the most suitable and available was property owned by the Sunapee Harbor-Riverway Corporation, located adjacent to the Old Town Hall. The site was approved by the Trustees and, in March 2008, the Town Meeting approved the purchase of the land and fund raising for the project.

The proposed library has a main and lower floor, with a gross are of 9,340 square feet, of which 6,975 net square feet are adult and children's library areas, work space and two much needed meeting rooms. New library construction is contingent on fund raising. The Trustees hope that it will be constructed in 2012. As of December 2009, the project is on hold.

### ***Old Town Hall***

The only use remaining in this building, after the Police Department vacated it in 2006, is the Thrift Shop. Originally built as a livery in the late 1800s, this building has seen many uses over the years. In modern times, most of the town departments were housed in this building, until the new Town Hall was constructed in 1989.

In 2007, the Old Town Hall Committee was formed to determine how to best use this village landmark. A Design Charrette was held in June of 2007 by PlanNH. It was concluded that the building could be used as a multi-function civic center with meeting space, gallery space,

and possible shops/offices. Recently the building was designated one of the “Seven to Save” historic buildings in New Hampshire. It has also been added to the State of New Hampshire’s Register of Historic Places.

The Master Plan survey had several questions related to the Old Town Hall. When asked what should be done with the Old Town Hall building, forty-eight percent (48%) indicated the town should retain ownership, 39% felt it should be sold to private interests and the balance (14%) thought it should be torn down.

In a separate question, a majority of respondents (52%) felt that if the town retained the property, it should be used as a community building. The last question asked how it should be used if sold to private interests. A large majority (66%) responded that they would prefer to see it be part of the efforts of the Sunapee Harbor-Riverway Corporation. Complete survey results are available in the appendix.

### ***Elementary School***

The Elementary School is located on School Street in Sunapee Village. It was constructed in 1927 with an addition in 1957 and renovation in 1985. The school serves approximately 200 students in grades K-5.

A School Building Committee was established in 2006/2007 to investigate the need for an addition to the school, but no proposal has been formulated.

### ***Middle/High School***

The Middle/High School serves students in grades 6-12 and is located on North Road. It currently serves just over 300 students. A major renovation was completed in 1998.

### ***Recommendations***

1. **The Planning Board should continue to support the Abbott Library move to the Harbor.**

It is the opinion of the Planning Board that the proposed relocation of the library to the harbor is very appropriate from a planning perspective. Locating the library in the Village District encourages centralized growth, thereby inhibiting sprawl.

The location will go a long way toward developing a “community center” which has long been talked about as being needed in Sunapee. By providing year-round activity in the Harbor, a new library would help seasonal businesses be more viable in the off-season months.

2. **Encourage the development of sidewalks throughout the Sunapee Harbor and Village area.**

In conjunction with recommendations from the Community Design section of this plan, new sidewalks and/or walking paths should be encouraged in the village areas of Town. This would also include new sidewalks, for the redesigned portion of Route 11 as it passes through Sunapee Village, and to provide pedestrian access to the Riverwalk.